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ABSTRACT

This learning packet was designed by the Special Education Supervisor Training Project (SEST) to develop professional supervisory competency in establishing a set of evaluative criteria and procedures to determine the quality, utility, and availability of learning materials, and to organize and conduct review sessions where teachers and other personnel can apply these criteria to new materials and make acquisitions in needed areas. Developed as a competency guided, self-training tool, the packet provides information on (1) contents of a selection tool, (2) sources of media information (selection tools), (3) development of a selection policy, (4) media evaluation procedures, (5) development of selection procedures, and (6) controversial materials and censorship. A post-test, post-test answer sheet, and bibliography are included to supplement the other information in the packet. Appended are a self-evaluation worksheet, a post-test worksheet, and a list of other independent study materials developed by the SEST. (BJB)

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INDEPENDENT STUDY TRAINING MATERIALS FOR PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISORY COMPETENCIES

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Special Education Supervisor Training Project
The University of Texas at Austin
Department of Educational Administration
1975

Performance-Based Teacher Education Project
AACTE

SP011 563

Independent Study Training Material

For

Professional Supervisory Competencies

Document #10d

MATERIAL SELECTION ©

By Joan DeLuca

With Revisions by Ellen Victory Bell

B-1 Evaluating and Selecting Learning Materials

Performance-Based Teacher Education Project
AACTE

Special Education Supervisor Training Project

Department of Educational Administration

The University of Texas at Austin

1975

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PREFACE

The learning packets developed by the Special Education Supervisor Training Project (SEST) at the University of Texas at Austin are competency-guided training materials keyed to selected critical competencies for professional supervisory personnel in school leadership positions. A series of ten packets, each dealing with one of twenty-four critical competencies has been developed. A list of the items available in the series appears on the last page of this document. These packets were developed locally to meet the need for independent study material to supplement formal training and field experiences in a professional preparation program.

This learning packet is intended for inclusion in a learning laboratory containing packets and many other types of materials for use in independent study. The equipment necessary to use those materials, as well as work space, is provided in the Learning Lab to assist users in choosing material and working through it at their own pace. A complete directory of material in the Learning Lab at the University of Texas, Department of Educational Administration has been published by the SEST Project under the title A Directory of Competency-Guided Supervisory Training Materials for Independent Study.

The learning packets have undergone extensive evaluation and revision through the coordinated efforts of several people. Corine Martinez

served as compiler and editor of the series. SEST students and research assistants involved in packet evaluations were Gwen Carter, Patricia Griner, Laurie Hunt, Mary Miller, Pat Miller and Eliseo Ruiz. Final revisions on the packets were made by Ellen Victory Bell, Gwen Carter, Sharon Guajardo and Jim Sanders.

Appreciation is expressed to all those that devoted time to the development of various learning packets: Carol Clark (Giesecke), Joan DeLuca, Stuart DeLuca, Jane Duckett, Pat Miller and Drs. Ben Harris, Billie Grace Herring, John D. King, Kenneth McIntyre and Darryl R. Townsend.

The University of Texas at Austin

Ben M. Harris
John D. King
Project Co-Directors

OVERVIEW ON
MATERIAL SELECTION

Competency:

Given expressed needs for learning materials, the supervisor can develop a set of evaluative criteria and procedures to determine the quality, utility, and availability of learning materials, and can organize and conduct review sessions where teachers and other personnel can apply the criteria to new materials and make recommendations for acquisitions in needed areas.

Objectives:

The participant will devise:

(1) a materials selection policy, including:

a. a method of assessing cost versus potential usage
b. a method of deciding timelinesss of material
c. a method of assessing durability of material
d. review of material currently being used
e. use of field tests
f. ways of dealing with controversial materials

(2) a selection procedure for selecting books and other media, which includes:

a. development and/or use of selection tools
b. methods for acting on suggestions of media acquisition
c. selection periods
d. perusal of equipment
e. a selection committee
f. handling of donations to media center

Evaluation:

Upon completion of the task assignment, the participant will successfully respond to the Self-Evaluation Checklist and the Post-Test as checked against the answer sheets provided.

DIRECTIONS

1. If you feel fairly confident of your ability to write a material selection policy and a set of related procedures, skip to the back of the packet and take the Post-Test. Use the Post-Test Work Sheet to record your answers.

2. Score your test using the Post-Test Answers, page 40. If 75% of your answers are correct (16 of the items), consider yourself as having met the criteria for achievement on this module. If you responded to less than 75% of the answers correctly, continue with the module.

3. Read page 3, Description of Situation and Task Assignment. You may want to put a paper clip to this part of the module or use a bookmarker for handy reference later.

4. Read page 4, "Contents of a Selection Tool."

5. Scan pages 5-13, "Sources of Media Information (Selection Tools)." Take note of what sources you will suggest using to complete the elementary school task assignment.

6. Read each of the following, referring back to page 3 as you finish each selection:

   "Development of a Selection Policy" (pp. 14-15)
   "The Evaluation Gap" (pp. 16-29)
   "Development of a Selection Procedure" (pp. 30-31)
   "Controversial Areas in Library Materials" (pp. 32-35)

7. Use the bibliography, page 41, to locate other sources of information on material selection before writing your task assignment.

8. Write the task assignment, referring frequently to page 3, "Description of Situation and Task Assignment."

9. Complete the Self-Evaluation Checklist. Use the Self-Evaluation Work Sheet found at the end of the packet to record your answers (p. 43).

10. Take the Post-Test, using the Post-Test Work Sheet provided at the end of the module. If you do not answer <u>at least</u> 75% of the items correctly (16 items), reread the module.

DESCRIPTION OF SITUATION AND TASK ASSIGNMENT

Description of Situation:

Assume that you have been put in charge of an elementary school library. The library has quite a few books but virtually no materials in other media. There has been no librarian in this school for two years; therefore the ordering has been left to the principal and her secretary. No particular criteria have been applied to selection; generally, the book selection supplied by a particular jobber has been accepted. The teachers are aware that excellent materials in other media are available but feel that the school district is unaware of their availability. The teachers also feel that they lack a way to make school district purchasers aware of their wants and needs. The principal is disturbed about this situation and has asked you to devise a selection policy which includes ways of providing input from many sources and a specific yearly timetable for the selection process. In addition, you are asked to devise selection criteria for those materials, including ways of deciding what materials are needed, ways of determining what materials are available and ways of deciding what to select from those available.

Task Assignment:

A. Devise a materials selection policy. This policy should include:

(1) a method of assessing the cost of material vs. potential usage
(2) a method of deciding the period in which materials will be timely
(3) a method of assessing wear and tear resistance of material
(4) use of reviews of material and/or a requirement for viewing the material in use
(5) use of field tests in materials selection
(6) ways of dealing with controversial materials

B. Devise a selection procedure to be used in selecting books and other media. The procedure should include:

(1) developing and/or using selection tools
(2) receiving and acting upon suggestions of media acquisition
(3) intervals at which selection should take place
(4) procedures to be used in selection of equipment
(5) composition and meetings of a "selection committee"
(6) procedures to be used upon receipt of gifts and donations to the library or media center

CONTENTS OF A SELECTION TOOL

by Joan DeLuca

1. A good selection tool should cover all media, and as many subject areas as possible.

2. Subject areas should be the primary division of the tool, with each subject being divided into media, and each medium into audience levels. This would encourage selection of several media on the same subject. Within each subject, there should be a special location of material which has a wide range of audience appeal or no specific audience level.

3. Information given in the subject listing should include complete physical description of the material, year of release or publication, series title, and price. The format for the reporting of this information should be consistent throughout.

4. The reviews of each title should be listed in a separate volume or volumes. The reviews should not be repeated from issue to issue of the tool. A review book should review only material which is new in the subject title volume accompanying it. Titles should be repeated in each volume issued for a given calendar year. The last volume issued in a calendar year would, therefore, serve as an index for the entire year.

5. Reviews should be both positive and negative. Every review volume should list the criteria used in the reviews and the qualifications of the reviewers.

6. If possible, the listing should be free to the producers of the materials. The tool should be available on a subscription basis to libraries.

7. Each volume should include an index of all titles listed in that volume as well as indexes for each of the media included and for all the producers listed.

8. The tool should be issued quarterly if possible.

9. Emphasis should be placed on currency and readability, not on high quality paper and time-consuming printing techniques.

There are no selection tools which meet all of these criteria. However, tools should be selected on the basis of how many of the criteria they meet.

SOURCES OF MEDIA INFORMATION (SELECTION TOOLS)

by Joan DeLuca

BOOKS

Indexes to Reviews and Review Sources

Chisholm, Margaret E., Media Indexes and Review Sources, School of Library and Information Services, University of Maryland, 1972. ($4.75)

Description: The purpose of this book is to identify sources of evaluative reviews, to assist decision-making about the purchase of review books, and to provide a guide and source for media classes.

Part I contains a good evaluation and overview of sources of reviews and a criticism of the state of the art of media reviewing.

Part II contains a list of review sources and includes the title, the type of publication, the publisher and cost, the type of reviews included, the type of media reviewed and other comments on each review source including its arrangement and method of indexing.

Part III is a subject guide and an index to sources (in Part II) by types of media.

Evaluation: This book is as useful for media classes as it would be for the librarian. The evaluation of review sources is quite complete, although it would be quickly dated as new sources are published.

Perkins, Flossie L., Book and Non-Book Media, Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1972.

Description: This book is a revision of Ralph Perkins' Book Selection Media (1967). It is intended for school librarians and describes lists and review sources for print and non-print media. For each book listed, the title, author, publisher, publication data, purposes, scope, subject headings covered, special features, usefulness, and cost are given. The books include bibliographies, lists, periodicals, catalogs, and review sources. In addition, sections entitled "aids to making selections for. . ." teenagers, children, college students and adults, teacher-parent background, and librarians are included, as well as a title index and an author-publisher index.

Evaluation: This book is mainly useful if one knows the title of the book or list of which one wishes an opinion. It includes so many types of sources that one may waste much time using it if all that is wanted is one kind of source, such as a selected list of books for a specific group.

Rufsvold, Margaret I. and Carolyn Guss, Guides to Newer Educational Media, Chicago: American Library Association, 1961.

Description: This small book contains lists of: media catalogs and lists; media periodicals; periodicals which review media; professional organizations concerned with newer media; bibliography of literature and research related to bibliographic control practices, problems, and possibilities; and catalogs and lists not generally available. The comments on these iters are more descriptive than evaluative.

Evaluation: The list is somewhat outdated but would serve as a starting point in a search for reviews since many of the books and periodicals mentioned still exist.

Subject or Title Lists Without Narrative Description or Review (many media)

Educators' Purchasing Guide, North American Publishing Company, 1972 (ann.).

Description: This large book is divided into two main parts, the first having to do with educational materials (texts, audio-visual materials, atlases and maps, and tests) and the second with equipment and supplies. It lists subjects in alphabetical order, and under each subject heading lists producers who make materials having to do with that subject. Some of the producers have purchased advertisements in the book which further describe the materials they produce and sell. None of the material is reviewed.

Evaluation: This book is not useful for finding specific products; rather, it serves to narrow the search by the potential purchaser for a producer of the kind of product he wishes to purchase.

Westinghouse Learning Corporation, Learning Directory, 1970-71 (vol. 1-7).

Description: This multivolume book deals with all kinds of print and nonprint material. It is basically classified according to subject area. To use it, one looks up a specific topic, then the audience level for which the material will be used, then the medium which is desired for the instruction at that level, then the specific title in that medium. Included with the title is the size, date of release, price, and source (including the catalog in which a description can be found).

Evaluation: If the directions are followed carefully, this can be an extremely informative source. The information given would serve to narrow the search so that only items which are affordable and which fit the grade level and subject areas desired need be evaluated, either by review or preview.

Subject or Title Lists with Narrative Description or Review (many media)

Educational Media Council, Educational Media Index, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964 (vol. 1-14).

Description: Volume 14 contains an index to this multi-volume work. This index is only by title. The other thirteen volumes contain descriptions of media on specific subjects. Volumes 1 and 2 contain descriptions of all media on all subjects for grades K-3 and 4-6 respectively. The other eleven volumes are intended for seventh grade to adult audiences and deal with one subject each. There is little cross-referencing within the subject volumes and none in the index. There are no supplements. All media dealing with one subject are grouped together with specific media indicated by symbols.

Evaluation: The index volume is quite useless unless one does not know the title for which one is searching. If one knows only the subject, one must guess in which volume it will be included. The symbols which are used to indicate the medium are impossible to remember, especially since some are quite similar to others.

Educators Progress Service,
Educators Guide to Free Films, 1970.
Educators Guide to Free Filmstrips, 1971.
Educators Guide to Free Tapes, Transcriptions, and Scripts, 1972.

Description: Each of these guides lists subjects in alphabetical order, then the titles in alphabetical order under each subject. The guides also have an alphabetical title index and an alphabetical subject index, and complete addresses of sources. The reviews are very brief and only descriptive.

Evaluation: This is an excellent source of material, provided that enough time is allowed for delivery and the teacher or librarian carefully previews each item before use.

National Information Center for Education Media (NICEM), Indexes:
Index to 35 mm. Educational Filmstrips, 2nd edition, 1970.
Index to 16 mm. Educational Films, 2nd edition, 1969.
Index to 8 mm. Motion Cartridges, 1969.
Index to Overhead Transparencies, 1969.
(Available from NICEM, University of Southern California, University Park, Los Angeles, California).

Description: All of the indexes include directions to use the index, an outline of subject headings contained in it, an index to subject headings, a subject guide which lists titles under each subject, and an alphabetical guide which briefly describes each title, as well as a directory of the producers and distributors of the titles. The indexes cover all grade levels from kindergarten to college

and include classifications of media intended for teacher education, adult viewing, special education, religious education, professional use, and industrial use.

The Index to 35 mm. Educational Filmstrips includes the title, edition or version, the length (frames), audience level, a brief description, the year of release, the series title (if applicable), and a Library of Congress number (if available). Also, the index indicates whether the filmstrip has captions, a record or records, a script, or an audio tape with it.

The Index to 16 mm. Educational Films includes the title, edition or version, length, audience level, description, series title (if applicable), producer and/or distributor, year of release, and Library of Congress number (if available).

The Index to 8 mm. Motion Cartridges includes a brief content description, physical description, length, color code, and audience level.

The Index to Overhead Transparencies includes the title, a physical description (including the size and type of transparency: prepared transparency, transparency master, operable transparency, or polarized transparency), the number of overlays, content description, audience level, producer/distributor, and series title (if applicable).

Evaluation: These indexes are quite useful, although they need supplementation often in order to remain current. The small computer type print makes them somewhat difficult to read, but that type of computer generation of material makes possible more currency of information because of the reduction of printing time.

Scholastic Teacher Magazine, New Educational Materials, 1970.

Description: This book reviews many types of material, both print and nonprint. Material is sent to the compilers by publishers and then sent to a specific reviewer who uses it in the classroom. The reviewer writes a review which includes a description of the form, content, and purpose of the material, suggestions for classroom use, the grade level suggested for use, and a rating on how well the material lives up to its claims, its educational and technical excellence, its price compared to its quality, and the usefulness of the teaching guides which may accompany it. The listings are divided first by grade level, then into subjects within the grade level, then into books and instructional materials within each subject. Art and Music Education, and Sex and Drug Education are listed separately. Guides and books for teachers are also reviewed. Reviews include prices and publication information. Both positive and negative reviews are presented.

Evaluation: This book seems to be well done. It is too short to be really comprehensive and is, of course, outdated, but it is likely that some of the material would still be available.

Subject or Title Lists, With or Without Reviews (one medium)

Hendershot, Carl H., Programmed Learning: A Bibliography of Programs and Presentation Devices, 4th edition, 1967. $11.00 (supplements, $5.50).

Description: The contents of this book include a directory of publishers of programmed material and a listing of programmed material by subject. The subject listing includes the title, author, and publication information about the material, the approximate number of hours it takes to complete the program, the number of frames the program has, the grade level for which it is intended, the price of the material, and a brief description of concepts covered or other pertinent information. In addition, an alphabetical list of publishers includes the programs published by each one, and an alphabetical list of manufacturers includes a list of devices assisting in program preparation. The material is in the form of a loose-leaf binder.

Evaluation: The subject areas in this book are quite broad and there is no cross-referencing. It is highly readable and easily useable even though there are no critical evaluations of the programs. It would be especially helpful to eliminate those programs one does not want.

Educational Film Library Association, Film Evaluation Guide, New Haven, Connecticut: Readers Press, Inc., 1965. (Covers the years 1946-1964; supplement, 1968).

Description: This book represents a compilation of the EFLA Evaluations (most of which were originally printed on file cards) from September, 1948, to August, 1964. Descriptions and reviews of films are listed alphabetically by title. There is a subject index by Dewey decimal number and a subject key to the Dewey decimal system. Each review represents the opinion of a review committee at a university, school, or library. In addition, the descriptions include the film time, color or black-and-white, price, distributor, subject areas covered, evaluation, a synopsis, possible uses of the film, the age level with which it can be used, a technical evaluation, comments about the film, and an overall rating. Both positive and negative reviews are included.

Evaluation: Unless one is quite familiar with the Dewey decimal system, looking up a film under a subject heading is somewhat time-consuming. Also, the guide is quite outdated. Nonetheless, if this book can be said to represent the Evaluations, then they are likely to be a good source of current information about films.

National Audiovisual Center, U. S. Government Films, Washington, D. C.

Description: This book is a listing of films made by government agencies. The films are listed by subject. Each title is briefly described

and the source and price are given. There is no evaluation. Also, there is a listing of government filmstrips by subject. Some descriptions of the filmstrips are given. There is a title index to the films and to the filmstrips.

Evaluation: Great care must be exercised in using these films. Many are outdated and some are extremely one-sided propaganda. Previews would be quite essential before use. The cost of the films is quite low, so very little money would be wasted if a film were ordered and not used.

Equipment Lists

National Audio Visual Association, The Audio Visual Equipment Directory, Fairfax, Virginia: National Audio Visual Association, 1971. $8.50.

Description: This book uses manufacturers' information to describe audio-visual equipment. It does not cover software in any form. It includes all types of equipment and supplies. It gives the price, rather exact specifications, and a picture of the piece of equipment. There is also a list of trade names and of members of the association.

Evaluation: This would be a good starting-point for the selection of equipment. Even though the list relies exclusively on manufacturers' information, neither the wording of the descriptions nor the pictures is in typical advertising style. Of course, the weak points of the piece of equipment are not specifically mentioned and in order to make a decision about a given product one would have to know something about the type of product in order to know ideal specifications.

PERIODICALS

Lists, With or Without Reviews (many media)

NOTE: The February 1973 issue of AV Guide lists magazines reviewing new media. It does not describe the magazines, but merely gives the subscription address.

Audio-Visual Instruction, periodical of AECT, to members $25.00/year; others $12.00/year.

Media reviewed: New products, equipment, books
Type of review: Descriptive
Other information: Within the magazine is a department called "Multi-Media Reviews," which is an index to where reviews can be found. This is a supplement to Multi-Media Reviews Index published by Pierian Press.

The Booklist, periodical of the ALA; issued twice monthly, September to July, and once in August; $15.00/year.

Media reviewed: Books, 16 mm. films, filmstrips, recordings
Type of review: Evaluative
Other information: The reviews include the price of the media. The book reviews are classified by the Dewey decimal system, and other media are in alphabetical order. Reviews are generally favorable; inclusion usually implies recommendation.

Educational Media, 9 issues per year, $5.00/year.

Media reviewed: Films and new products
Type of review: They seem descriptive, but inclusion may imply recommendation
Other information: A very slim magazine, which seems to be unsure of the audience to which it is aiming.

Instructor, monthly, $8.00/year.

Media reviewed: Records, filmstrips, films, kits, transparencies, tapes
Type of review: Inclusion implies recommendation; the reviews are descriptive but are evaluative by implication.

K-Eight, monthly, 9 issues per year, $7.00/year.

Media reviewed: All kinds; in the issues looked at, transparencies, filmstrips, a filmstrip-cassette kit, and a simulation game were reviewed. Also reviews new products based on manufacturers' information.
Type of review: Evaluative where specified (new products are described)
Other information: Reviews are generally favorable. Reviewer's name is given. Usually there is a statement about the use of the material prior to evaluation by the reviewer. Information includes complete source and price. No apparent criteria for reviews.

Media and Methods, monthly, 9 issues per year, $7.00/year.

Media reviewed: Critical reviews of films and books; descriptions based on producers' information on films, filmstrips, cassettes, and books.
Type of review: Evaluative for films and books and department called "M & M Recommended"; descriptive in department called "Mediabag"
Other information: The May 1973 issue details the "Maxi Awards," which are intended to be an annual event. Readers vote for their favorites among feature films, short films, filmstrips, slide sets,

transparencies, paperbacks, textbooks, records and tapes, games and multimedia kits, teacher education—professional materials, newspapers, magazines, study prints, and other media.

Media Review, periodical of the Laboratory Schools, University of Chicago, bi-monthly, $6.00/year (Vol. 1, No. 1, January 1973; the July-August issue is an index to the volume).

Media reviewed: The content of the magazine includes articles on a given topic or two, reviews of media dealing with that topic, and general reviews. There is an explanation of the ratings of films and some of the criteria used in evaluation.
Type of review: The reviews are alphabetized by title; they are rather long and detailed, and tend to emphasize technical aspects. They also cite possible uses of the film, its time, cost, and source.

Previews, monthly, $2.50/year to subscribers to Library Journal/School Library Journal; other subscribers $7.50/year.

Media reviewed: 16 mm. films, 8 mm. films, filmstrips, slides, prints, kits. The reviews are divided by medium and then by subject.
Type of review: Evaluative
Other information: Some indication of criteria used in reviews given in an editorial in the October 1972 issue.

Lists, With or Without Reviews (one medium)

Educational Broadcasting Review, National Association of Educational Broadcasters, bi-monthly, $12.50/year.

Media reviewed: Educational television programs
Type of review: Evaluative
Other information: Also reviews books and research having to do with educational television.

Educational Products Report, Educational Products Information Exchange, monthly October to June, $35.00/year to members of EPIE.

Media reviewed: Each issue deals with a particular topic and includes a supplement dealing with media or supplies having to do with that topic.
Type of review: The description of the media and products are extremely specific, though not evaluative, and would make it easy for the purchaser to eliminate some from consideration and to check further on others. There are comments on characteristics of products that many people would not think of.

Film Library Quarterly, Film Library Information Council, included in membership, $8.00/year.

Media reviewed: 16 mm. films; some books
Type of review: Evaluative; reviews are solicited, no apparent criteria, no prices given.

Landers Film Reviews, monthly (except June, July, and August).

Media reviewed: 16 mm. filmstrips
Type of review: Evaluative and descriptive. Each issue contains an alphabetical listing, by title, of critical reviews and a list of new materials which are described on the basis of information provided by the producer. Each issue has a title and subject index, and each volume is indexed the same way. The reviews contain the publication information, audience intended, the subject area, and the purpose for which the film is intended, as well as a physical description of the film.

Harrison Tape Guide, bi-monthly, $1.00/copy, $4.50/year.

Media reviewed: 8-track, cassette, reel-to-reel, and quadrophonic tapes
Type of review: There are no reviews or descriptions. Tapes of all kinds are classified variously by type of content, performer, show and film titles, composer, type of instrumentation; purely instructional tapes are not included, though many of the tapes included could be used for instructional purposes.

Schwann Long Playing Record Catalog may also be used.

Tape Recording, monthly, $3.00/year.

Media reviewed: All kinds of tape recordings
Type of review: Evaluative

DEVELOPMENT OF A SELECTION POLICY

1. While emphasis in media selection should be placed on the widest possible usage for the least money, the exact emphasis must depend on the resources of the district and the school. Some districts or schools would be forced to adopt a relatively rigid policy that most material must be usable by most children in at least one grade level; others may select material to be used mainly for enrichment by relatively few children. Policies of other districts might include the requirement that most materials selected be related to units or subjects taught by one or more teachers. Usage criteria in the elementary school described in this task would probably demand rather high usage in a wide range of subject areas since selection has been almost nonexistent previously.

2. Some materials may never become dated; however, a regular interval at which materials are checked for timeliness should be included in a selection policy. In addition, attempts should be made to select materials which are not dated by such superficial aspects as dress and automobiles.

3. Assessing wear and tear resistance is not an easy task. Some materials do not last well but are relatively inexpensive to replace; therefore, "life span" of materials must be seen in relation to replacement cost. Wear and tear resistance can also be related to "datedness" of materials. Materials which are very useful, but which will become dated relatively quickly, can have a lower wear and tear resistance than materials about which this is not true. Some types of materials consist of many parts; it is important that it be possible to replace the least wear resistant parts. A selection policy ought to include specific points to consider in assessing wear and tear resistance of specific media. These criteria can include carrying cases, packaging and binding, etc. In the elementary school described in this task, high durability should be a prime consideration, since emphasis is being placed on building a media collection rather than adding to an already existing one.

4. Reviews and observations and field tests are very useful in material selection. The extent of their use depends in part on the cost of the materials. It is often quite difficult to find where a certain item is reviewed. However, publishers' representatives frequently are able to provide information about where materials are being used. A selection policy could provide a requirement for favorable reviews, observations and/or field tests on materials which cost up to a certain limit.

5. Dealing with controversial materials can be extremely difficult. Part of this problem can be solved by attempting to make the selection committee as representative as possible, even by including some community members in its membership. In addition, a provision for input on the part of community members should be a part of the selection procedure. The selection procedure should be communicated to the community so that many problems can be dealt with before material is added to the collection. Finally, some provision can be made for regular review and resubmission for consideration of some materials in order to purposely solicit the opinions of community members. It must be remembered that community opinions change with the passage of time and materials considered objectionable at one time may not be considered so a few months or years later.

This module does not propose a particular format for a material selection policy or for a material selection procedure. The exact format is quite unimportant. The policy and procedure should deal with most of the areas proposed in this module, should be specified in writing as exactly as possible, and should be communicated to any individuals and groups who might wish to make suggestions for additions to the library/media center collection. Exact composition and size of a selection committee and the intervals between its meetings are not nearly as important as the <u>existence</u> of such a committee and the assurance to the individuals and groups who suggest additions to the library/media center collection that all suggestions will be considered in relation to a relatively objective set of criteria. With the vast amount of material available for use by elementary and secondary school children and the relatively small amount of money most schools and districts have to purchase such material, a specific, efficient selection procedure is essential.

THE EVALUATION GAP

Janet French

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The Evaluation Gap

Janet French

The problems posed by the formidable production of information today are compounded by an equally remarkable multiplicity of information carriers. Anyone wishing to search for, make use of, or transmit information is faced with a dizzying number of possibilities. Certainly the educator is among those suffering from what appear to be an excess of choices. Charged with identifying "appropriate" information carriers, he must bear in mind his agency's curriculum, the competencies and idiosyncrasies of both staff and students, the physical limitations of his plant, the financial limitations of his budget. He must then relate all these variables to the range of available materials. Even without considering any exotic equipment, the educator is still faced with a host of possible carriers and possible combinations of features: print and nonprint, sound or silent, motion or still, simple or complex. And he must decide whether he wants the material for individual, small group, or large group use, or some combination of these elements, since materials are not all equally adaptable to all these uses.

These are by no means the only factors to be considered. The selector must know that not all formats are equally suited to any given educational task. Wide variations in quality also exist in the handling of any given topic in a given medium. Even when superior materials have been identified, the person charged with selection cannot assume that his job is done. Either his information or its treatment may be outdated tomorrow by new discoveries, new approaches in the original medium, or a superior presentation in an entirely different format.

Under the circumstances it seems reasonable to expect that a main goal of educational selection agents would be to establish national services for the bibliographic control and evaluation of all widely used instructional materials. Trade books long ago succumbed to such controls in response to the needs of librarians. To a substantial degree, 16mm films and educational records are also subject to control and evaluation procedures. As the matter now stands, however, no comparable systematic evaluation services have been established for the other media.

A "Frustrating Task"[1]

Is there a substantial need for a comprehensive evaluation of the neglected nonprint media? How useful are the currently available selection aids? What suggestions might be made for general and local evaluation procedures? This study attempts to answer such questions for that unpretentious but widely used medium, the filmstrip, for reasons noted below.

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For those who believe that nonprint media represent a new order of things, it may be worth noting that filmstrips have been around for 50 years.[2] It would not be fair to insinuate, however, that most films produced during this long period of time have been especially good. In fact, the brevity and mediocrity of filmstrips as a class before the Sixties may well explain their past exclusion from critical considerations.

The situation today has changed substantially. Color has almost entirely replaced the old black-and-white format, and the average new film is almost twice as long as films produced in the Fifties. Sound has been introduced through the use of synchronized records and tapes, and while it has not been uniformly successful, it can at its best add a lively dimension of depth and excitement to the visual presentation. Most important, several producers new to the field have been using the medium with respect and sensibility and are making films of aesthetic as well as educational value. (Let anyone who doubts it see Guidance Associates' Streets, Prairies, and Valleys: The Life of Carl Sandburg.) Their superior film may be helping to stimulate a general upgrading of standards. Certainly substantial improvements in both technical and instructional quality have been evident and this fact, coupled with the filmstrip's original virtues of inexpensiveness and simplicity, probably account for its present position as the most widely used of the nonprint instructional resources.

It would be foolhardy to try to unravel the precise relationships between new educational practices, improved materials, and increased allocations (now, disastrously, waning). All have contributed to a vast expansion of materials holdings. In 1966, the educational establishment bought $442 million worth of a/v materials and equipment.[3] In that year the filmstrips absorbed over $500,000 of the $165 million in ESEA Title II funds spent on a/v materials.[4] That this substantial investment has not been generated solely by Title II pressures is shown by the fact that in the past eight years there has been an increase of 1000 percent in filmstrip sales to schools.[5] More surprising, perhaps, but fully compatible are the results of an NEW survey made in spring 1967, which showed that of some 1600 elementary and high school teachers polled, 81.2 percent were using silent filmstrips, a figure which surpassed the reported use of any other material including records.[6]

Bibliographic Control and Selection

To what extent has the substantial investment in filmstrips and their evident popularity prompted the development of useful selection tools? It should be noted first that a basic catalog of recommended titles on the order of the Wilson or ALA (book) catalogs has never been produced; anyone contemplating the development of a filmstrip collection must be prepared to build it from scratch. Help appears to be coming, however, from at least two sources.

The dimensions of the selection problem for both backlisted and current titles take on sharper focus when viewed in relation to the more than 25,000

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individual titles listed in NICEM's Index to 35mm Filmstrips, published by Bowker last fall. To be fair, it must be admitted that some of these are no longer in print and that others were designed for adult rather than classroom use. Yet, even if we tentatively eliminate several thousand filmstrips, the residue represents a formidable challenge to building a superior filmstrip collection.

The NICEM Index itself, despite the grandeur of its proportions, is a puzzling tool to use even as a simple finding guide. The only information on the bases for inclusion is that the entries represent titles recorded in the data bank of the University of California since 1958. The user has no way of knowing, therefore, whether the Index is intended to be a comprehensive list of all filmstrips produced in this country (or elsewhere) from any given date or whether an effort was made to trace all such productions or whether the list merely represents items submitted for entry by those producers who were moved to cooperate. If the Index is not a comprehensive guide, neither is it a simple key to current materials on the order of Books in Print since the alphabetic title list is peppered with "out of print" entries. Even such basic bits of information as the total number of entries listed and the number of o/p titles in the list have been omitted; the only way to approach either figure is through page sampling. The Index may not seem worth such extensive carping, but it was produced with substantial fanfare and represents a much-needed step towards the bibliographic control of the medium. Unfortunately, it also represents the cavalier attitude towards media control and evaluation evidenced by many of the agencies presently engaged in either enterprise.

A fervor for systematizing is undoubtably a distinguishing feature of librarianship. Responding to the accelerated growth of the nonprint media in school libraries, School Library Journal, a principal source of critical book reviews, launched a semiannual Audio-visual Guide in November 1967. In an editorial introducing it, Evelyn Geller accurately reflected both the needs of the field and a professional passion:

> We felt that the main obstacle to better incorporation of a/v materials has been the failure to impose on them the same genius for organization that librarians, dictating their need for bibliographic control and systematic evaluation, have been able to stamp on the book industry.[7]

She picked up the challenge by publishing this nonevaluative but highly useful subject index to the current output of media in the pre-K to 12 range. The list, systematically expanded since its inception, now includes films, filmstrips, 8mm loops, slides and transparencies, discs and tapes, study prints, maps and charts, and a few miscellaneous items. It offers some useful figures for comparison.

Current Evaluation: Slim Pickings

In November 1967, 204 filmstrips and filmstrip series were reported

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in the Guide. This figure increased to 250 in April 1968 and spurted again to 291 in November that year. Thus school-oriented filmstrip production from January 1968 to February 1969, as reported by the major producers, came to 541 series and individual titles. (The total for 1969, as reported in the April and November 1969 A/V Guides, come to 617, but we are using the 1968 figures for comparison.)

It is instructive to compare the 1968 filmstrip or filmstrip series reported -- 541 -- with the number of filmstrip reviews published during the same period. Though for many obvious reasons such a comparison is on wobbly statistical ground, it still provides an indication of evaluative activity in relation to production.

The "Index to Audiovisual Reviews," published at frequent intervals in Audiovisual Instruction, reveals a total of 230 filmstrip reviews identified in the index in 1968. While it is perfectly possible that many reviews were overlooked, it is also true that large numbers of the listings were repeaters -- reviews in different journals reported for the same filmstrip series. Numerically, then, filmstrip reviewing activity is well behind production, though the output for school consumption is certainly amenable to complete coverage. The man on the firing line -- the selection agent -- not only lacks selection tools for backlisted titles, but faces an increasing disparity between total production and items critically reviewed.

Seven readily obtainable journals carry most of the reviews listed: Educational Screen and AV Guide, Film News, The Grade Teacher, The Instructor, School Library Journal, Science Teacher, Senior Scholastic's teacher edition, and Social Education. In addition, the ALA Booklist last fall launched its filmstrip reviews. Of these publications, Educational Screen, School Library Journal, and Film News offer the greatest number of reviews, the first two covering an average of six to seven filmstrips or filmstrip series per month, the latter publishing ten or eleven reviews per bimonthly issue. The rest publish their reviews on a rather irregular basis, averaging three or less a month. Considering both the quantity and quality of their evaluations, School Library Journal and Film News warrant consideration by the selection agent as prime sources of responsible reviews, but neither provides the volume of service necessary to keep pace with production.

Booklist, long established as a critical guide to current books, 16mm films, and reference materials, may provide a comprehensive source of critical evaluation. In answer to the question on the extensiveness of Booklist's planned coverage, Paul Brawley, editor of the nonprint reviews, wrote a year ago:

> The number of nonprint items to be reviewed will be directly proportional to the quality of the items received. Every known producer and distributor of nonprint materials (e.g., in the first year, filmstrips and 8mm loops) is being contacted in an effort to preview and evaluate as close to 100 percent of the educational market as possible.[8]

However, general access to ALA's evaluations is not as broad as this

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statement implies since reviews are being published only for material which "meets our criteria of selection and therefore is recommended for purchase."[9] Though there are doubtless many good reasons for limiting the reviews to recommended materials, space being an obvious factor, Booklist has seriously abridged the usefulness of its projected service through this decision. The reader will not know whether titles omitted are the victims of oversight or have been actively rejected. Though Booklist does seriously qualify its recommendations, as a concession to the generally poorer quality of production in the audiovisual field, its cautiously worded criticisms militate against their effectiveness.

Less obvious, but of greater consequence, a publication's ban on outright negative reviews damages the whole industry by withholding from public discussion the feedback producers need to improve their films. Perceptive and carefully considered reviews, both positive and negative, perform an essential service: at their best they represent a kind of ongoing, in-service education for the selection agent, calling attention to considerations that might otherwise have been overlooked, identifying the flaws and merits of a film, comparing it with others of superior or poorer quality.

Despite the manifold advantages of publishing reviews which reflect a full range of opinions, at present only School Library Journal does so as a matter of policy. Considering the modest number of filmstrip reviews published in SLJ, it is obvious that both producers and purchasers are receiving very little information about rejected materials. This is without question one of the most serious deficiencies of current a/v selection tools and a marked contrast to the publication policies of the major book reviews.

A number of agencies have award programs for filmstrips they judge to have special merit. Of these, Educational Film Library Association's Blue Ribbon awards, given annually at the American Film Festival competition, are the most important; they have been described as being "in the same tradition as ALA's Newbery-Caldecott Award."[10] Though one may doubt that they are as significant as the Newbery-Caldecott prizes, their choices are worthy of attention. EFLA makes a descriptive list of contenders available in its annual publication, American Film Festival: The Best Of 19--.

Hearts and Flowers Evaluation

While the end of any selection procedure is presumably the same -- to identify the best material for a given purpose -- the degrees of responsibility imposed on persons evaluating materials vary substantially. The person selecting materials for his own use obviously accounts to no one save himself, but as the circle of persons affected by an evaluative decision increases, so does his measure of responsibility. The judgment of the evaluator may affect only one group of students, if he is a teacher choosing material for his class, or it may affect a whole school or school district, if judgment is being brought to bear on purchases for the media collection. If the results of evaluation are made public, as in printed reviews, the number of persons and institutions potentially affected by the evaluation increases enormously and, to

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the same degree, so does the evaluator's responsibility to provide a carefully considered and informative review.

It is possible, of course, to become so overwhelmed with these responsibilities that a kind of mental paralysis sets in. In an article on materials evaluation, one author indicated both a total abnegation of her critical faculties and a denial of the existence of objective criteria:

> Ethics involve one's professional responsibilities to make an evaluation that is fair to both the producer and the consumer. It is anticipated that material receiving poor ratings may be used successfully by some teachers, or for some children and, conversely, that materials receiving good ratings could be unsuccessful in many cases. There is also a general concern about the effect of the variability of teacher-pupil-classroom transactions upon ratings; recognition is given to the possibility that the time of day or the weather may play some role in the success or failure of a material, and that success with materials varies according to the ability of the teacher to use them creatively. Even under hypothetically ideal conditions, the variabilities of a pupil, teacher, and environment are such that evaluation of a material is by nature intrinsically qualified.[11]

Not too far removed from the impotence of this point of view, and quite as useless to someone seeking guidance are the evaluators who feel a greater obligation to be kind to the producer than to be honest with the user. In her excellent Manual on Film Evaluation, Emily Jones admonished:

> In the past evaluators have tended to be overkind rather than overcritical. They have been trained in the theory "if you can't say something good, don't say anything." This was based partly on the lack of materials which made it necessary to accept mediocre productions provided they dealt with the subject called for. This is no longer necessary, and mediocre films should be judged as severely as mediocre anything else. No one wants to hurt the feelings of film producers ... but the responsibility of the evaluator is to the user, and there is no point saying "The film may be useful with some ... groups," when what you mean is "The subject is unimportant, the treatment is uninteresting, and it is impossible to imagine any group of normal intelligence sitting through it."

Despite Miss Jones' reference to past practice, the hearts-and-flowers approach is still evident in many reviews. It seems likely, too, that the lack of adverse recommendations in journals that carry reviews is as symptomatic of the sentiments she describes as lack of space or the desire to push good materials.

The fact is that it is both possible and reasonable to establish useful guidelines to cover the important features of any given medium. There is no need to examine them here in depth since virtually every treatise on a/v materials includes a list of evaluative criteria. Suffice it to say that

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the technical aspects of a filmstrip, for instance, and an accompanying record or tape, admit readily to objective evaluation they either are or are not clear and free from distortion, synchronized with the sense of the captions or script, or relevant to the apparent subject of the film. With regard to the content itself, the questions of whether the material is up to date and accurate also seem beyond the influence of the time of day, the weather, or the creativity of the teacher.

Perhaps when the evaluator considers the coherence or logic of the presentation, he has entered into the arena of subjective judgment, and certainly this is true with regard to whether or not he finds the film stimulating, imaginative, or effective. If the evaluator takes his charge seriously, however, there is no reason for him to apologize for his subjective responses. Quite the contrary, in direct proportion to his appreciation for the film medium and his understanding of children and teaching needs, these personal responses will comprise a valuable aspect of his evaluation.

Of substantial bearing, too, on the usefulness of an evaluation, is the evaluator's familiarity with the medium and, in particular, with comparable titles in the subject area. The old maxim to the contrary, comparisons are not odious, and a knowledge of similar materials will give the evaluator a concrete basis for his appraisal of the relative merits of two or more titles. Furthermore, where such comparisons are possible, the subsequent review, to be of maximum value, will indicate the order of preference and the reasons for ranking. While references to related titles are an expected feature of book evaluation, they are almost totally absent from media reviews. The need for this kind of guidance is pressing, however, in view of the vast outpouring of new materials, the duplication of coverage, and the lack of basic selection tools for recommended titles. Another factor which makes comparisons particularly important in film evaluation is the special vulnerability of the medium to obsolescence and the need to find satisfactory replacements for aging titles.

It does not suffice that all these considerations enter into an estimate of the material's value. If the evaluator expects others to use the results of his effort, and particularly if his review is to be published, it is essential that his written evaluation indicates clearly:

1. The material's physical features
2. Its content
3. Its possible uses
4. Its comparative merits
5. The strengths or weaknesses which led to the final evaluation

As Emily Jones warns, "The evaluator must keep in mind the fact that he is acting for someone else ... He is being the eyes and ears of a potential user."[13]

Perhaps it would be useful to cite — without comment — the total

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content of two typical reviews. Their usefulness, or lack of it, should be self-evident, though it may be worth noting that the first review purports to offer guidance to the purchase of an 18-filmstrip set priced at $108, while the second reviews a single film sold by the New York Times for $7.95.

Review A

Here are some answers to the endless and always recurring questions: Why do we need maps? What's inside us? What makes morning, noon, and night? The strips can be used by either class or individuals doing special study and research. Pupils are encouraged to think about the questions and answers and to understand the explanations offered. The material is adapted to the learning needs of young pupils.[14]

Review B

If the librarian, teacher, or group leader can bear exposure to yet another word on the "youth rebellion," this filmstrip should be provocative, for it poses the ultimate question: "So what happens when you're 31?" (Don't trust anyone over 30.) The introduction by Russell Baker, in the discussion manual, is worth the price alone and should be required reading for parents and young people on either side of 30.

The filmstrip captures the youth phenomenon, reinforced by expert shots of their native habitats, by charts that signify their staggering presence among us, and by the veracity of their own dulcet tones and sounds. The black and white prints are dramatic in their straightforward reportage; the sound track well-matched to them. Both sides of the record are audibly cued; Side Two, however, allows for discussion breaks after frames 25 and 54. The manual lists activities, discussion questions, and books and pamphlets especially for young adults.

Since it lends itself to discussion, Generation ... may be used effectively by a library club, guidance department, church group, social studies class, or even a PTA "happening." It may give hope to disadvantaged parents.[15]

A question may fairly be raised about the length of the second review; a little judicious surgery would not abridge the value of its content. But if the main concern of either the evaluators or the journals carrying reviews hinges on their brevity, the whole undertaking becomes pointless. The substance of the reviews should be weighed, not against the price tag of the materials reviewed, but in consideration of the degree to which they accurately mirror their potential service to the users. Insofar as an evaluation fulfills this end, it is successful; insofar as it falls short, it represents a waste of time and money for the reviewer and the journal, as well as for the selection agent who stopped to read it.

In-District Evaluation: An Awful Example

Despite the surface advantage of systematic in-district evaluation, the

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literature is full of cases of catch-as-catch-can practices euphemistically described as "evaluation." Were these projects pursued as a fringe activity, they would still be a waste of energy; when they are employed to identify materials which are to be a central factor in the educational program, they are inexcusable. A case in point was reported in Audio-visual Instruction describing preparations for an individualized instruction program. With pride and fantastic naivete, the author reported:

> About this time the teachers were ready to evaluate instructional materials as they related to their objectives. The Audio-Visual Department called in the complete nonprint libraries of EBF and SVE, as well as the "quick-strip" library of Eye Gate for evaluation and possible purchase. For the next few weeks the teachers looked through catalogs of all the known producers of nonprint materials. (They) were free to ... order for evaluation any nonprint materials which they felt might have merit for our program....By April, after the evaluation of many hundreds of filmstrips, tapes, records, and programmed materials, the teachers were ready to start ordering instructional materials with particular instructional objectives in mind.[16]

Overlooking the fact that the main suppliers reported are more noteworthy for the size of their catalogs than for the consistent quality of their products, the description of this project's "evaluation" procedures reads like a catalog of unsupportable practices. Nowhere is there any suggestion that criteria were established or adopted for the media under consideration, or that the teachers were given training in their implementation. One of the principal hazards to sound evaluation is that the skills and understandings necessary to the enterprise are so often underestimated. In-district selection practices appear to be based, time and again, on the assumption that the teacher who uses the material is, by virtue of that fact, fully equipped to judge it. Unfortunately, for systems operating under such assumptions, the use of a material does not of itself promote or guarantee expertise in its choice. A cardinal tenet of any evaluation process is that it should be preceded by careful indoctrination of the participants so that they fully understand the selection criteria and the nature of the responses required of them.

If the designer of this undertaking failed to appreciate the need for criteria, he performed as poorly in providing guidance in identifying materials for preview. With a very large staff and a great deal of time it might be feasible (if not desirable) to call in "complete libraries" of the major producers; but the present tidal wave of production will soon make such innocent unselective approaches to evaluation an impossibility. Given the size of the author's task force -- 12 teachers -- and the time allotted for evaluation -- three hours a week for about six weeks, their reported activities are nothing less than preposterous. In the time available to them they are described as having examined "the catalogs of all the known producers of nonprint material," previewed "the complete nonprint libraries of EBF, SVE and Eye Gate," and evaluated (apparently to their satisfaction) "many hundreds of filmstrips, tapes, records, and programmed materials." In view of the fact that the average filmstrip runs about 15 minutes and one side of an average LP a half

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hour, this reported evaluation activity can serve the profession solely in the capacity of an Awful Example. In the absence of any real commitment to guide the evaluation process and participate in it, in how many other districts have media specialists promoted -- or at least accepted -- similar debacles?

Responsibilities of the Media Specialist

If these harried pseudoevaluation programs are not to become -- or remain -- general practice, media specialists must take on their full responsibilities for the selection of materials. They must develop or adopt valid criteria for evaluation and train other media specialists and selected classroom teachers to apply them to materials being considered. They must know both the physical aspects of the media and their content, and they should know which materials and producers are most likely to meet specific needs.

Responsible selection agents will try to bring order and purposefulness to evaluation, seeing it as an ongoing process, not a series of crash programs. To this end they will develop selective lists and systematically reevaluate their holdings to maintain a collection of genuine merit. Insofar as possible, they will structure each evaluation project so that evaluation can take place in the context of comparison -- both of the viewpoints of the participants and of the materials themselves. On the other hand, they will not be cajoled into previewing massive portions of a producer's catalog, a practice which reduces the possibility of careful comparisons and tends to create a sense of obligation to the producer or his agent. Occasionally this arrangement gets an added fillip through the offer of a bonus if a certain number of items are purchased. Such inducements, when accepted, virtually paralyze any genuine evaluative effort.

The media specialist will make use of the selection tools available to him and encourage the development of better ones. I admit they are not now and probably never will be wholly satisfactory. Yet they provide a means of identifying promising materials, some of which might otherwise be overlooked, with far more hope of success than simple faith in the descriptive listings of a catalog or Herculean assaults on complete libraries of materials. The present lack of selective catalogs or adequate reviews suggests that persons responsible for buying media have never seen the need for such selection tools. If this is so, it follows that they have either failed to understand their responsibilities as selection agents, or they have failed to assume them.

That is really my main point here. The media specialist cannot properly take responsibility solely for the form of the materials he administers; he is equally responsible for its content. The teachers and others whom he draws into selection will have, at best, a fragmented acquaintance with the media collection. It is the specialist who must be familiar with it all -- its strengths and weaknesses, the gaps that need filling, the material that needs replacing. He must be aware of what is available in the collection if he is to advise on its use. He must know what promising new materials are on the market and what superior materials appear on the backlists if his selection procedures are to be anything but exercises in serendipity. Of all the

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persons involved in selection, he alone is responsive to the total curriculum; he alone is knowledgeable about the complete collection and the needs of all its users. It is his responsibility, therefore, to initiate the selection process, guide its functioning, and see that it is brought to a satisfactory consummation.

At this juncture it may be worthwhile to consider the mystique of group evaluation. In 1957 Paul Reed wrote unequivocally:

> Selection of materials should be based upon the judgments of those who are to use them. Group judgments are superior to individual judgments. Teacher judgments are best when they are based upon actual experience in using the materials in classroom situations.[17]

In 1963 Edward Schofield, addressing a symposium, quoted this statement almost word for word.[18] In 1968 Carlton Erickson used it verbatim in his handbook Administering Instructional Media Programs. It may, of course, be perfectly true, though none of the exponents offers supporting evidence and precisely how the "best" selections might be determined is difficult to conceive. What is apparent is that in 1957, when Mr. Reed enunciated this doctrine, the dimensions of both media budgets and production were modest enough to contemplate in-district selection programs which strictly adhered to it.

It may seem heretical to suggest this, but the fact remains that group evaluation is neither the only nor necessarily the best approach to media selection. It should seem reasonable to suggest that the results of group evaluation can only be as good as the training, motivation, and experience of the participants. It is therefore a practice qualified in value and one which can readily degenerate into a parody of genuine evaluation: witness the example quoted earlier. Furthermore, considering the logistics of enormously increased production and demand, evaluation procedures which involve large numbers of volunteers (not to mention those impressed into service) may prove to be a luxury better suited to the infancy than to present dimensions of media production.

Regardless of who participates in the preliminary events, the media specialist remains the central figure in the selection process, not merely its agent, and the final ordering of priorities is his to make. Responsibility conceived, his selections will be based on the merits of the material available, the nature of his collection, the needs of his users, and the size of his budget. A decision to buy or not to buy based fairly upon these considerations will represent the proper culmination of the evaluative process.

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DEVELOPMENT OF A SELECTION PROCEDURE

1. The librarian should encourage the submission of ideas for library materials from administrators, teachers, students, and the public. Ideas for materials should be welcome at all times.

2. Individuals who make suggestions for materials should be strongly encouraged to make their suggestions as specific as possible. If a request is for a particular piece of material, the more information which is provided about the exact title, the producer, date of release, price, anticipated use, etc., the more quickly a decision can be made about the material, and the more quickly it can be obtained for use. A form should be provided for collecting this information.

3. Neither selection criteria nor the mechanics of acquisition should be a mystery to those who use the library. An individual who wishes to make a suggestion may have a catalog, a review, or the actual material right at hand and can facilitate selection and acquisition if he knows what information is needed.

4. Professional meetings are another source of ideas for the library. The most obvious sources of information are the displays by producers of various materials. Catalogs and promotional material should be obtained, dated, indexed and filed.

5. Speakers at professional meetings often provide bibliographies of material pertaining to the subject about which they are speaking. In addition, they often have written their own material about the subject. Teachers and others who attend such meetings should be encouraged to provide the librarian with a copy of any bibliographies obtained.

6. Selection should take place at irregular intervals during the school year. Selection of materials need not be simultaneous with purchase, if fiscal considerations make this impossible. The essentially clerical task of purchasing can be done whenever financial considerations permit as long as selection has taken place. Selection of very expensive equipment which will be used for several years may take place at a predetermined time once a year.

7. It is likely that the selection committee will give the librarian wide discretion in selecting much material without their meeting and discussing each item, especially material which has won awards, is part of a series, or is under the authorship of an individual whose work has been repeatedly approved by the selection committee.

8. The selection of equipment which is regularly purchased, such as 16 mm. projectors, overhead projectors, etc., should be separate from the selection of materials. There is relatively little concern for the amount of software available for use with these very common pieces of equipment.

9. The selection of equipment which has not been purchased before, which is relatively expensive, and which is essential to the use of a particular type of software, such as a microfilm reader and/or printer, a video tape recorder or player, etc., should be considered along with the selection of material to be used with it. It is essential that one of the criteria for equipment selection be the use it will receive and the amount of software which is available for use with it.

10. A selection committee should be chosen from the teachers of the school with the librarian as chairman, the principal as an ex-officio member, and one of more supervisors or central office administrators as ex-officio members. All grade levels and/or subject areas should be represented as far as possible. This selection committee can also serve as reviewers of the material, with or without the use of other relevant reviews.

11. Gifts and donations of materials should be accepted on the same basis as other material. Patrons may often be encouraged to contribute money or purchase a specific item which has already been considered by the selection committee but rejected because of high expense and lack of absolute necessity to have the material. The selection committee can meet at irregular intervals to consider selections offered by library patrons.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THESE SUGGESTIONS ARE NOT ABSOLUTE RULES FOR MEDIA SELECTION. A SELECTION PROCEDURE MUST FIT THE NEEDS OF THE SCHOOL AND THE DISTRICT AND MUST BE CONSISTENT WITH CURRICULUM AND FISCAL POLICIES OF THE SCHOOL AND DISTRICT.

CONTROVERSIAL AREAS

IN

LIBRARY MATERIALS

(Excerpts)

Georgia Cole

Retyped from NASSP Bulletin 50 (January, 1966), pp. 33-36

Controversial Areas in Library Materials

Georgia Cole

Handling Censorship Demands

Experience has shown that schools that have been most successful in facing censorship demands of outside pressure groups are those in which administrators have stood firmly behind the faculty member under attack, refused to do the bidding of the censors, and have reiterated the fact that teachers and librarians are qualified to choose the materials to be used in the schools. There are many cases on record in which such a firm stand has ended the would-be attack of the censors.

Not all schools are so lucky, however. When pressure groups attack, the principal and his faculty will be much better able to avert the attack if they have previously taken certain important steps.

Of primary importance is a book selection policy statement. Any school that does not have a statement of its selection policy should prepare one. Better yet, the school district should prepare one. The policy should state clearly the belief of the faculty that freedom for students to read is essential to education in a democracy. It should indicate that materials to be used in the school should be selected by teachers and librarians in consultation with administrators. Parents and students also aid in book selection, but the final decision rests with professional personnel. The statement should give the objectives of selection and criteria for selection. In every school, principal and faculty should take time to discuss the right of all individuals to read, the right of free inquiry, and the importance of these rights in the education of young people.

The preparation of the policy statement will doubtless be the task of a committee, but the statement should be formally adopted by the school district. All board members, administrators, and teachers should be made aware of its adoption and of the content of the statement.

Open discussion of the problem of censorship and the adoption of a policy statement usually are sufficient to relieve the anxieties of teachers and librarians regarding censorship. Knowing that they have the backing of fellow faculty members, the administration, and the school board, they usually feel free to select and teach the materials which they know are best.

Each school or school district should have a clearly defined procedure for dealing with objections to materials being used in the school. Channels should be established for handling complaints and teachers should know what these channels are. The complainant should be required to put his objection in writing. This requirement often stops the self-appointed censor, for charges often are made anonymously by telephone by persons who are unwilling to identify themselves.

Cont.

The school should have on hand a form to be completed by those complainants who are willing to put their objections in writing. Many schools use the form "Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of a Book," prepared by the National Council of Teachers of English and available from the NCTE. Frequently extremists are unwilling to complete and sign this form, and censorship attempts end at this point.

Of course there are instances of censorship attempts being taken to school boards and into the courts. In most cases, however, the censors have won only when school officials have not stood firm. Pressure groups, though loud, usually are small. Most parents want the right of free inquiry for their children. Again and again the American people have shown they will defend the right to read.

Although censorship attacks must be met at the local level, there are groups sympathetic to the cause of intellectual freedom that can provide advice on methods of meeting an attack. These same groups have prepared materials with which all principals should be acquainted.[1]

Pressure Group Demands and the Principal

In censorship, as in everything else concerning the school program, the leadership role of the principal is most important. The complexities of censorship attacks are such that he may prefer to avoid the unpleasantness at all costs -- even to submit to their demands. But the future of our educational system is at stake. If the elementary and secondary schools are to accomplish their goals, they cannot yield to these attacks. Censorship of reading materials can stifle teaching and learning and result in inadequate education for young people, whether it is terminal education or preparation for college.

The college freshman who has read nothing more complex than teenage fiction is ill-prepared for freshman English and the reading required in other courses. Just as great a handicap is the lack of knowledge which burdens him if he knows only one political party, one way of life, one religion, one race -- which may be the case if the curriculum has been shaped to fit the beliefs of pressure groups.

Even sadder perhaps is the plight of the student for whom high school is terminal education. If there was no opportunity in high school to read the great novels of this century, he may never read them, and his life will be less rich without them. If his schooling has been limited, as the censors would limit it, he will be poorly prepared for his role as a citizen.

Those who demand censorship have mistaken or forgotten the purpose of education in a democracy. But educators must not forget. "The purpose of education must remain what it has always been: to develop a free, reasoning person who can make up his own mind, who can understand his culture, and who can live compassionately with his fellow man."[2] Such a reasoning person cannot be developed unless he has freedom to read, to discuss, and to know.

Cont.

REFERENCES

1. Special materials and information on censorship in the schools may be obtained from:
American Library Association, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611. American Civil Liberties Union, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10 New York. National Council of Teachers of English, 508 South Sixth Street, Champaign, Ill. National Education Association, Commission on Professional Rights and Responsibilities, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington 6, D.C. National School Boards Association, Inc., 1940 Sheridan Road, Evanston, Illinois. American Textbook Publishers Institute, 432 Park Avenue South, New York, New York.

2. NCTE. The Students' Right to Read. Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1962. p.11.

Now it is time for you to begin the actual writing of the task assignment. Refer to page 3, Description of Situation and Task Assignment, often. Try to call upon what you have read in the module and from the Bibliography. Write your policy first, then your procedures to clearly implement the policy provisions. After you have finished writing the material selection policy and the material selection procedure, use the Self-Evaluation Checklist, page 37, to determine if your task is complete.

Material Selection

SELF-EVALUATION CHECKLIST

Use the Work Sheet, page 43. Please do not write on this form.

1. The first major part of your task assignment was to devise a material selection policy. Does your policy include some guidelines on the following?

    a. Assessing the cost of the material vs. potential usage. Yes___ No___

    b. Deciding the period in which material will be considered timely. Yes___ No___

    c. Assessing durability of material. Yes___ No___

    d. Using reviews of material. Yes___ No___

    e. Using field tests. Yes___ No___

    f. Dealing with controversial materials. Yes___ No___

2. Many times a selection tool for media is already available from a regional service center or a book publishing company, but it may lack evaluative reviews of media or some other component of a good selection tool. You should be familiar with the format and content of a good selection tool, even if you never have to develop one yourself. In writing a description of a good selection tool, did you include the following?

    a. Information on the format of the tool. Yes___ No___

    b. What information should be included in the subject listing. Yes___ No___

    c. A policy on use of positive and negative reviews, criteria used in reviews, and reviewer's qualifications. Yes___ No___

    d. Frequency of issuance of the tool. Yes___ No___

3. Many sources of media acquisition suggestions will be available to you, the media specialist, such as teacher's suggestions, salesmen's suggestions, catalogs, and bibliographies from professional meetings. Did you include a form in your procedure for selecting materials which assures you of having the data needed to order the material? Yes___ No___

4. Selection of materials and regularly purchased equipment can take place at irregular intervals and out of sequence with actual purchase. However, a schedule for material selection, regularly purchased equipment selection, and new equipment selection, with its own software, must be made. Did you include in your schedule intervals for the following?

   a. Materials and regularly purchased equipment will be selected. Yes___ No___

   b. Donations will be considered. Yes___ No___

   c. New equipment and appropriate software will be selected. Yes___ No___

5. Did you include the composition of the selection committee in your material selection procedure? Yes___ No___

Material Selection

POST-TEST

Use the Post-Test Work Sheet, page 44. Please do not write on this form.

1. Name at least four topics which should be covered in a material selection policy, such as assessing the cost of material versus potential usage.

2. What is one way to remind those who suggest media acquisitions of the information needed to order the material?

3. Name three sources of suggestions for media acquisitions.

4. What piece of media is the most widely used of the nonprint instructional resources?

5. What three types of personnel should comprise the selection committee?

6. Name four responsibilities of the media specialist.

7. Name at least three specific sources of media reviews useful in selecting filmstrips.

8. What factor makes the most difference in whether a pressure group succeeds in creating a furor over a piece of media used in the school?

Material Selection

POST-TEST ANSWERS

1. Timeliness of material
   Durability of material
   Reviews of material
   Field tests of material
   Controversial materials

2. A form including spaces to supply the exact title, the producer, date of release, price, anticipated use, and other information

3. Individual suggestions, catalogs and promotional material, bibliographies obtained at professional meetings, and educational journals

4. Filmstrip

5. Librarian, principal, teachers from all grade levels and/or departments, one or more supervisors or central office administrators, and possibly one or two parents

6. Develop or adopt valid criteria for evaluation

   Train other media specialists and teachers to apply certain criteria to materials being considered

   Be familiar with physical aspects of the media and their content

   Know which materials and producers are more likely to meet specific needs

   Systematically reevaluate media already in the collection

7. NICEM'S Index to 35 mm. Filmstrips
   SLJ Audio-Visual Guide
   Audiovisual Instruction
   School Library Journal
   Film News
   ALA Booklist
   Educational Screen and AV Guide
   The Grade Teacher
   The Instructor
   Science Teacher
   Senior Scholastic's Teacher Edition
   Social Education

8. Firm building principal and central office leadership in explaining the written material selection policy and procedure

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Other sources to consult in the area of material selection are:

Hartsell, Horace C. "Guidelines for the Selection of Instructional Materials." AVI, 12 (January 1967), pp. 23-26.

Boyer, Calvin and Nancy Eaton. Selection Policies. Austin: Armadillo Press, 1971.

Melcher, Daniel. On Acquisitions. Chicago: ALA, 1971.

What to Do Before the Censor Comes. National Council of Teachers of English.

APPENDICES

Material Selection

SELF-EVALUATION WORK SHEET

1.

a. Yes___ No___
b. Yes___ No___
c. Yes___ No___
d. Yes___ No___
e. Yes___ No___
f. Yes___ No___

2.

a. Yes___ No___
b. Yes___ No___
c. Yes___ No___
d. Yes___ No___

3. Yes___ No___

4.

a. Yes___ No___
b. Yes___ No___
c. Yes___ No___

5. Yes___ No___

If you did not check "yes" on each item, either go back and add the information in your task assignment or write a brief explanation as to why the item was not included.

Respondent's Name_____ Date_____
or Soc. Sec. No.

Material Selection

POST-TEST WORK SHEET

1. Four topics in policy.

_____ a.

_____ b.

_____ c.

_____ d.

2. Reminders of information to order.

_____ _____

_____

3. Sources of suggestions for media.

_____ a.

_____ b.

_____ c.

4. Nonprint instructional media most widely used.

_____ _____

5. Personnel on selection committee.

_____ a.

_____ b.

_____ c.

6. Four responsibilities of media specialist.

_____ a. _____

_____

_____ b. _____

_____

_____ c. _____

_____

_____ d. _____

_____

7. Three sources of reviews for filmstrips.

_____ a.

_____ b.

_____ c.

8. Factor in pressure group success.

_____ _____

_____

_____TOTAL CORRECT

%

Scoring Directions: Check your answers above against the answers (p. 41). In the Scoring Column to the left, code each response as follows: + - completely correct, 0 - partially correct, - incorrect. Total your + marks. Divide by 20 to derive your percentage score. Record your percentage score in the box the left.

Respondent's Name_____ Date_____
or Soc. Sec. No.

Check: ____Pretest or
____Post-test

LIST OF INDEPENDENT STUDY MATERIAL

DEVELOPED BY THE SEST PROJECT

The Delphi Technique for Curriculum Planning
A-1 Setting Instructional Goals (Document #10a)

Designing a Concept Development Unit
A-2 Designing Instructional Units (Document #10b)

Designing a Study of Available Resources
B-3 Evaluating the Utilization of Learning Resources (Document #10c)

Developing Job Descriptions
C-1 Developing a Staffing Plan (Document #10e)

Material Selection
B-1 Evaluating and Selecting Learning Materials (Document #10d)

Preparing School News Releases for the Media
G-1 Informing the Public (Document #10h)

Selecting Personnel for a New School Program
C-2 Recruiting and Selecting Personnel (Document #10f)

Self-Instructional Module on Time Utilization
D-1 Revising Existing Structures (Document #10g)

OTHER RELATED PUBLICATIONS

A Directory of Competency-Guided Supervisory Training Materials for Independent Study (Document #9)

A Selected Bibliography for Professional Supervisory Competencies (Document #8)